Sergeant Major Rivera enlisted in the United States Army 10 January 1990 and attended One Station Unit Training (OSUT) at Fort Benning Georgia. Upon completion he was awarded the MOS 11B, Infantryman.

SGM Rivera has served in many leadership positions to include Team Leader, BFV Gunner, Squad Leader, Section Leader, Platoon Sergeant, Battalion Master Gunner, First Sergeant, BN Operations Sergeant Major and BDE Operations Sergeant Major.

SGM Rivera's assignments include, D co 4-12 IN, Baumholder Germany; HHC 4-12 IN, Baumholder Germany; H Co 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Calvary Regiment, Fort Irwin California; B Co 2-2 IN Vilseck Germany; HHC 2-2 IN Vilseck Germany; National Police Transition Team, Baghdad Iraq; 7th Army NCOA Grafenwhoer Germany; WHINSEC, Fort Benning Georgia; 2-69 AR, 3ABCT, 3ID, Fort Benning Georgia; Basra Operations Center Operational Partnership Team, Basra Iraq; HHT, BSTB, 3rd BDE HQ, 3ID Operations SGM, Fort Benning Georgia.

SGM Rivera's Military education include, the Military Assistance and Security Advisor Course; Combatives Level 4; Combat Life Savers course; Unit Antiterrorism Advisor; Senior Leaders Course, Bradley Fighting Vehicle Master Gunner; Equal Opportunity Leaders course; Advanced Leaders Course, and the Warrior Leaders Course.

SGM Rivera is a graduate of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy Class #60 and holds a Bachelors degree in Liberal Arts from Excelsior College.

SGM Rivera's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal (2OLC), Meritorious Service Medal (2 OLC), Army Commendation Medal (8 OLC), Army Achievement Medal (6 OLC), Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Valorous Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Citation, Army Superior Unit Award, Army Good Conduct Medal (8th Award), National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal w/three combat stars, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed forces Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (4th Award), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (5th Award), NATO Medal (2nd Award)

SGM Rivera has been awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Expert Infantryman's Badge and the German Schutzenschnur-Gold. Additionally SGM Rivera is a member of the order of Saint Maurice and a Noble Patron of Armor.